

PR
3991
G3M9

AA
0003979820



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

MY WEB OF LIFE.



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

To Maggie
from J.W.S.
30 Dec. 187

MY WEB OF LIFE:

A FRAGMENT.

•



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

MY WEB OF LIFE:

A FRAGMENT.

"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."

—JOB vii. 5.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

Glasgow: 1876.

PR

2998

G3 M9

MY WEB OF LIFE:

A FRAGMENT.

LAST evening—sitting in my room alone,
And worn and weary with a hard day's toil,
My thoughts in lazy, dreamy idleness,
Chasing each other like Phantoms in a mist :
While memory linked the sweet and bitter
Of the past and present,
And shapes and forms of bygone joys and sorrows
Came trooping to my mind—
Thus I in fancy weaved

937812

My Web of Life.

A tiny fragile thread of light-hued silk
Was slowly wound from off the parent coil,
And, after plattings under skilful hands,
Was formed into a warp of human life ;
Thereafter, gently, and by slow degrees,
Between the fibres of the fragile web,
The pulsing shuttle passed the threads of woof
To brace and strengthen up the work begun ;
Then gradually there moulded into shape
A fair young life.

.

One early spring, when fully twenty years
Had rolled their ceaseless course throughout the
loom,
I saw arise, and glance across my web,

A golden thread of dazzling glorious sheen
Which sent the pulses of my beating heart
Back to their source. Transfixed I gazed,
And wondered whence and why my path it crossed.
Anon its course drew nearer to my side,
And hovered round me as I watched its form,
Until in unison our hearts were blended,
In thought and every human feeling
One we became, and each one's future life
Was linked and interwoven with the other's.

A long probation of four years was ours,
While side by side we plied our endless task,
And ev'ry hour and ev'ry day and year
Our threads of life we wove in harmony.
I could, but dare not, trace, or e'en recall,
The joy and gladness of those happy hours,
When two young loving hearts were all in all—
The path we trod a garden strewed with flowers.

Could I but paint her as she stood before me
Like a pure being far above this earth,
And casting from her eyes a deep spell o'er me,
Remaining still—she seemed of heavenly birth,
Around her shedding love and joy and mirth.

All through this time, as I have said before,
Our threads of life were wove in harmony,
Till, on a glorious bright spring April day,
Our fates were fixed, and our two loving lives
Were platted into *one*.

My vision fails, my heart and pulses beat,
As I remember all that time of joy,
When life's spring roses grew amongst our feet,
And life itself seemed free from all alloy;
When hand in hand, and heart in heart, we led
Each other lovingly, the live long day,
And in our inmost souls to God we pled

To guide us—guard us on our unknown way.

A year its happy course had well nigh rolled,
When one dear precious silver thread appears—
An offshoot from the platted silk and gold—
To cheer my life in many after years.

My little budding beauteous treasure,
In every act and look a charm;
None can see thee without pleasure,
Nature made thy heart so warm:
In all thou dost—to *me* thy greatest beauty
Each day shines forth—self-sacrifice to duty.

And year by year the silver threads shot out
Their tendril cords, and grew and worked apace,
And nimble fingers plied with constant care
To strengthen life and keep the mem'ry green;
And year by year the hearts were closely knit,

And all around the firmly-platted cord
Arose a little world of fairy threads,
Which grew in brightness and in strength and beauty.
What was the colder outer world to us?
We had *our* kingdom in each other's hearts—
Although sometimes the worries and the sores
Of little cares would bring a passing cloud
O'er all our brightness, make the pulses throb,
And raise a trembling fear upon our hearts
Of coming sorrow—but one look within
The sacred circle of our hearth and home,
And all dread vanished, as we calmly thought
How good and generous our great God is;
And He will surely guide us on our way,
And keep us safe. In this security
We lulled our fears to peace.

For more than twenty years our spirits lived
In constant sweet communion,

Supporting, with that love which knows no self,
Each other's footsteps, on our worldly way ;
And day by day, in love's sweet sympathy,
Smoothing the rugged places in our path ;
And round about us there had quickly grown
A coronet of thirteen silver threads,
All bright and shining—fair to look upon ;
And in our vanity we felt and said
Each unto each—No harm shall come to us :
We'll watch our silver threads, and see them grow
In strength and beauty, whilst we sit and love.

I cannot picture what those happy years
Brought to my heart, in all their varied cares ;
The joys — the doubts — the longing hopes and
fears,
Which he who passes through life's struggle shares.
We often realized the fabled coil
Penelope in olden times intended,

When coming morn undid the work and toil
The past day's hours had left complete and ended.

When all was sunshine in our life and home,
And every thread seemed strong and swiftly plied,
When daily pictures grew beneath our hands,
And lovely shapes and forms were on the canvas seen,
One night a sudden cry arose !!

“A Thread had Snapped,”

And all the skill of earnest, loving workers,
With eager, pleading, wistful, watching eyes,
And nimble fingers searching in the dark,
Could not again unite the fractured cord.

Ah ! me, the saddened hearts with which we
worked,

Let fall the tears that blurred the pictures now.

Loved one ! in every shape and form he lurked—
In curly hair, and broad, expansive brow—
Earth's treasure gone : to Thy decree we bow.

No sooner had the dear link from our chain been
cut,

The thread left, snapped and broken, in the web,
Than she, who'd been the essence of my life,
Began to fade, and lose the shining lustre of the
gold.

And day by day the fingers, oft so nimble, slower
came ;

And foot so active once, became weak-clogged ;
And eye so bright, lost all its wonted fire ;
And heart and strength seemed blighted, withering up.
Ah, me ! 'tis sad to see life's gushing stream,
Which we have known in all its brightness,
Dry up and shrink, and leave its worn-out banks,
And roll its waters to the eternal sea.

Oh, how I watched the slow, but sure, decay
Of strength and health, and saw the life go out;
And marked the wasting look which, day by
day,

Left in our hearts not even room for doubt.
And still my heart and quivering pulses throb,
When memory calls the vision to my mind,
Of all that time of agony and pain—
To sit and know the fast sure ebbing tide,
Would leave me stranded on the lonely shore;
At last in agony my heart cried out
In all its anguish—Gone for evermore!

How my heart burns with all its olden fire,
When I recall the glorious times now gone!
But ah! how soon I feel its glows expire,
When memory whispers thou art now *alone*.
For weeks it seemed to my o'er charged mind
As if e'en time had ceased to roll its course,

I felt so stunned and wretched.
At last—Oh, God!—the wakening came
In all its bitterness; and my weary web of life
I knew at last that I must weave *alone*.

For three sad years we worked our weary way,
Till time had healed the canker of the wound,
And though the vacant spaces in our homely life
Still kept alive the chasms in our hearts,
Custom had ta'en the darkness from our eyes,
And once again some fairy pictures grew
Beneath our fingers, and the sombre hue
Of three years' mourning
Gave place to brighter colours,
Which one by one crept through the woof.

And one fair thread from out our family skein
Had stepped aside,

And platted with another thread
Of her own choosing.

It could not last. Another glorious thread
Who'd shed, for thirteen summers, at our loom
A light around him, like the sun at noon,
Was paled and withered, and, in spite of all
That human skill could do, to ply the woof,
The silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was
broken.

A great abyss, a dark and dreary chasm,
Seems still to lie between the *then* and *now*;
And, as I see the sun light on the hills
Of what in olden days was *once* my Home,
My heart sinks, groaning in its dark despair.
Heavenly Father, God of mercy—love,
Teach me to raise my heart to Thee—above,

And with my latest quiv'ring words to say—
May all I love on earth “walk in God’s way.”

How often in my dreams the air seems filled
With visions of the old and happy time,
And day and night I fancy that I hear
Songs set in cadence with the thoughts they bring.
In one of these my day-light waking moods
I fancied that I heard a wailing voice
Pour forth its plaint in

Echoes of the Past.

I.

The faintest, softest whisper,
Changes atoms in their place,
And every word that’s uttered,
Is photographed in space ;

And through all nature's soundings,
As long as time shall last,
Our ears are ever ringing
With the echoes of the past.

II.

The ghosts of long-hushed voices
Are whispering in the air,
And songs and laughs are mixing
With the wailings of despair;
And tones which long have ceased to sound
On earth, are in the blast,
With their sad and solemn warnings,
Like the echoes of the past.

III.

There are wafted in the morning
The sounds of early years,

There are wafted in the evening
The sounds of long-shed tears ;
And every day and every hour
A shadow's o'er us cast,
Bearing in its misty folds
The echoes of the past.

IV.

Then let us watch our every word—
Put a bridle on our tongue ;
Refrain from harsh expressions,
Whether old or young :
For to all a time is coming—
To some of us how fast—
When our beating hearts and lives will be
But echoes of the past.

Joy cometh with the morning, we are told.

Ah, would that so my long dark night might end,
My heart again feel brightness as of old !
I cry in all my anguish—Father, Friend,
Eternal Saviour, balm to this heart send !

By day and night my tears have been my meat,
When I remember all the things now gone ;
My constant cry is—could I plant my feet
Upon that rock which Thou hast made thine own !

Why art thou then cast down my doubting soul?
Why is my heart disquieted within?
Oh, could I truly feel that He would roll
From off my head its heavy load of sin !

Hope thou in God ; how long, oh God, how long
Shall I these hands in trembling anguish raise?
When in the night shall be with me Thy song?
When shall my heart in humble faith Thee praise?

Deep calleth unto deep; and all Thy waves
And water-spouts seem rushing o'er my heart :
Cling, cries my soul, unto that Rock which saves—
Trust and His hand shall never from thee part.

O, golden words ! I feel the soothing balm
They pour into my heart, and still its trembling beat.
Is this, O Lord my God, the blessed calm
Which Thou hast promised from Thy mercy seat
To all who come to Thee, and lay their burden at
Thy feet?

My soul is truly *panting* after Thee,
Is thirsting for the waters of Thy spring;
In mercy, Father, stretch Thy hand and bring
My longing heart from out this troubled sea.

Still trust in God—let that now be the song
Which day and night from this crushed heart shall rise,

Until I join that white-washed glorious throng
Which stands around Thy throne in *Paradise*.

Gone art thou, too, my second silver thread;
Radiant and beaming as a brilliant star.
Around thy path may heaven its blessings shed,
Circling thy home, and may He keep afar
Earth's heavier troubles from thy much loved head.

.

Now in the Web, as each year weaves its round,
Three vanished threads are missing from its woof.

J. W. G.

November, 1876.

This book is DUE on the last
date stamped below.

10M-11-50(2555) 470

REMINGTON RAND - 20

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 397 982 0

PR
3991
G3M9

